



November 18, 2008
Juried Competitions Seminar
Virgil Jacoson and Nathan Florence



SPRINGVILLE MUSEUM OF ART

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Entering Juried Competitions (Insider Tips)

- **Know the type of exhibition.** See if it “fits” your artistic preferences. It makes no sense, if you are a realist wildlife artist, to enter exhibitions for modern art. Some juried competitive exhibitions do not declare their “preferences” but are strongly biased toward one style of art or another. It is a good idea to look at past show catalogues, or talk to those who have entered in the past.
- **Have a “Thick Skin”** (and read “if” by Rudyard Kipling). Even great artists are at times juried out of exhibitions. Sometimes pieces that win awards in one show are juried out of another. You have to meet “triumph and disaster” with equanimity. Attitude is everything... sometimes you want to break your brushes when not accepted (avoid the “R” word, *rejected*), and other times you hunker-down and say “I’ll get in next year.”
- **The jurying process is a flawed system.** It is just that no one else has figured out a better one yet. The best way to keep a good attitude is to say that your work was not accepted (avoid the “R” word), because the jurors were not of the quality to select the fine work you submitted. The jurying process is imprecise with about 5% of the “not accepted” work needing acceptance and 5% of the accepted works needing to be “not accepted.” Now, if your work is not accepted by a wide range of jurors in a variety of shows, you have something to work on.
- **Competitive exhibitions are good for your art.** They challenge you to have a work of art ready by a specific deadline. They motivate one to do their best work. They prepare you for the “real world” of art, not the cushioned environment where you are praised by your teachers and mother.
- **“Preparation, Preparation, Preparation!”** Nearly one –tenth of the work entered in the annual Springville Museum of Art Spring Salon is not ready to hang. The picture is not framed, or it is not solidly attached to the frame, or the picture projects out in front of the frame, or the frame is falling apart, or the canvas is not protected from the rear with foam core, or the wire is really a piece of string and ready to break, or the wire is too weak for the weight of the picture and frame, etc... So many things can go wrong. Because of liability, sometimes the exhibition sponsors will take out pieces which are particularly fragile, dangerous or unprepared.

Some thoughts on Juried Competitions by Nathan Florence

Deep Thoughts by Jack Handey “It’s easy to sit there and say you’d like to have more money and I guess that’s what I like about it. It’s easy. Just sitting there, rocking back and forth, wanting that money.”

Consider what kind of art you make and what competitions/shows would be a good venue for it.

“Don’t decide what success is before you know what you do.”-Dennis Smith
i.e. don’t be disappointed that you don’t have a gallery in New York when what you really do well and love to do is flower paintings that are perfect for hotel rooms.

Is this a good match?

Entering a juried competition is like applying for a job. Don’t apply if it’s not something that you really want or stand a chance to get.

Do a Background check

What is the venue for the exhibit?

Many venues or organizations have specific platforms or interests that dictate the choices of the juror. It’s easy for a juror to narrow down the field simply by eliminating the entries that don’t fit the requirements.

Is it a show that will provide what you are looking for if you get in?

When I started painting professionally I was interested in getting into shows just to get into shows. I entered local art association shows, regional shows, whatever. Now I’m much more discriminating.

Who is the Juror, what is their specialty, opinion, etc.

Find out about other shows the Juror has curated or juried and what kinds of works were selected to see if matches what you do.

Follow the directions on the entry form

Enter, enter, enter and don’t give up when you don’t get in...because you won’t.

IF

Rudyard Kipling's Verse

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream-and not make dreams your master;
If you can think-and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And-which is more-you'll be a Man, my son!